

Tried and *tested*

Wearing white is said to enhance the aura



Kundalini yoga teacher training

How do 5am starts, cold showers and a diet of mung beans sound? Deputy Editor **Gemma Birss** dives head first into a year of yoga teacher training

Since my first yoga class around 11 years ago, I've wanted to become a yoga teacher. However, it wasn't until I happened upon the delights of Kundalini Yoga about four years ago that I took the plunge.

Kundalini Yoga is a mélange of kriyas (yoga postures), chanting and meditations that stimulate the dormant Kundalini energy at the base of the spine and drive it up the body's central channel, clearing the energy centres as it goes and paving the way to a realisation of one's infinite potential.

The Kundalini Yoga teacher training program consists of 12 intensive practical weekends, usually one a month. You must attend each weekend to pass the course and you have two years to complete the course. As well as the weekends, there's a substantial

amount of homework, a White Tantra day to attend, a forty day meditation that must be recorded in a journal and an exam (I thought I'd seen the last of those when I left uni!). However, compared to the British Wheel of Yoga's three-year teacher training course and the Shivananda four-week intensive programme, Kundalini Yoga provides a happy medium.

Karam Kriya at London's Alchemy

I signed up with Karam Kriya run by author and teacher Shiv Charan Singh (affectionately known as Shiv) and his wife Satya Kaur. I chose this school for convenience, as it was based at one of my favourite spots; London's spiritual mecca, the Alchemy Centre in Camden.

The weekends were intensive, starting at 5am each day with a

morning sadhana, which consists of a reading of the japji, followed by a Kundalini Yoga set and polished off with half an hour of devotional chanting. The morning yoga sets were guided by a different trainee teacher each Saturday and Sunday. My turn to lead happened terrifyingly early on in the course. However, any blunders were graciously and compassionately forgiven in the feedback session afterwards.

The eye-wateringly early start aside, these morning sessions were invigorating and, as anyone with the stamina to do yoga at the crack of dawn will tell you, gave me a real sense of achievement. However, trekking to Camden at 5am on a freezing winter's morning sometimes proved impossible and the alarm clock would be reset to join the group at 9am in time for the morning classes.

A communal breakfast of porridge